

Message Text

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17

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 COME-00 EB-11 DRC-01 SCS-03 SCCT-02

AID-20 CCO-00 FBO-01 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NIC-01

NSC-07 SP-03 OC-06 OPR-02 PA-04 USSS-00 RSC-01 PRS-01

SCA-01 A-01 OMB-01 SS-20 SY-04 /128 W

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R 210300Z MAY 74

FM AMCONSUL SYDNEY

TO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 5420

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SYDNEY 1021

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINS, MARR, AS

SUBJ: ARSON AGAINST AMERICAN ESTABLISHMENTS IN SYDNEY

SUMMARY: ON NIGHT OF MAY 20-21 TWO ATTACKS, WHICH THE POLICE REGARD AS ATTEMPTED ARSON, TOOK PLACE IN BUILDINGS IN WHICH THE AMERICAN NATIONAL CLUB AND THE AMERICAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE ARE TENANTS. NOBODY WAS INJURED AND THE DAMAGE WAS NOT SEVERE. POLICE ARE STEPPING UP SURVEILLANCE OF PROMINENT AMERICAN INSTITUTIONS.

1. APPARENTLY IN COORDINATION WITH THE PROTEST AGAINST THE EXMOUTH MILITARY INSTALLATION AT THE NORTHWEST CAPE, TWO CASES OF ATTEMPTED ARSON WERE PERPETRATED AGAINST AMERICAN ESTABLISHMENTS IN SYDNEY LAST NIGHT. BRIEF REPORTS APPEARED IN THE PRESS THIS MORNING BUT THE FOLLOWING IS BASED ON INFO PROVIDED BY THE N.S.W. POLICE. AT 2328 HOURS, MAY 20, THE FIRE ALARM WAS TRIGGERED AT CITRA HOUSE, A DOWNTOWN OFFICE BUILDING, THE TOP THREE FLOORS OF WHICH ARE OCCUPIED BY THE AMERICAN NATIONAL CLUB. THE FIRE DEPARTMENT RESPONDED AND PUT OUT THE BLAZE WHICH APPARENTLY WAS CAUSED BY LIGHTING SOME FLAMMABLE LIQUID WHICH HAD BEEN POURED INTO ONE OF THE

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ELEVATORS. THE FIRE CAUSED DAMAGE OF APPROXIMATELY DOL 5,000.

SEVEN MINUTES LATER AT 0005 HOURS, MAY 21, THE AUSTRALIAN BROADCASTING COMMISSION IN SYDNEY RECEIVED AN ANONYMOUS TELEPHONE CALL FROM A MALE VOICE STATING THAT "FIRE BOMBS" HAD BEEN PLACED IN THE AMERICAN NATIONAL CLUB AND THE AMERICAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE BUILDINGS IN SUPPORT OF THE PROTESTERS AT EXMOUTH AND IN PROTEST AGAINST POLICE BRUTALITY THERE. FIRE DEPARTMENT INVESTIGATED THE BUILDING HOUSING THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND FOUND THAT A SIMILAR FLAMMABLE LIQUID HAD BEEN IGNITED AGAINST THE OUTSIDE DOOR OF THE BUILDING. THE DOOR HAD BEEN SET AFIRE BUT THE FIRE WENT OUT NATURALLY CAUSING ABOUT DOLS 200 DAMAGE. THERE WAS NO EXPLOSION AT EITHER BUILDING AND THE POLICE ARE TREATING BOTH CASES AS ATTEMPTED ARSON. INSPECTOR WHITELAW OF THE SPECIAL BRANCH SAYS THAT HAD THERE BEEN NO TELEPHONE CALL ESTABLISHING THE POLITICAL MOTIVATION OF THESE INCIDENTS, THERE WOULD HAVE BEEN NO REASON FOR THE POLICE TO SUSPECT POLITICAL MOTIVATION OR TO CORRELATE THE TWO FIRES.

2. FIRE DEPARTMENT OFFICIALS REPORT THAT THE PARKING LOT ATTENDANT UNDER CITRA HOUSE STATED HE HAD SEEN A YOUNG MAN RUNNING FAST DOWN THE STREET AS THE FIRE ALARM WENT OFF. HE DESCRIBED THE YOUNG MAN AS 20 TO 25, 5 FT. 3 IN. TO 5 FT. 4 IN. TALL, SHOULDER LENGTH DARK HAIR, MEDIUM BUILD, AND WEARING BLUE JEANS. POLICE ARE, OF COURSE, ATTEMPTING TO FIND THE PERPETRATOR BUT DO NOT HAVE MUCH TO GO ON.

3. AS A RESULT POLICE ARE TAKING SPECIAL MEASURES TO STEP UP SURVEILLANCE ON CERTAIN OUTSTANDING AMERICAN PREMISES IN SYDNEY INCLUDING NOT ONLY THE AMERICAN NATIONAL CLUB AND AMERICAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, BUT THE PAN AM HEAD OFFICE (A FREQUENT TARGET OF PROTESTORS), THE AMERICAN CONSULATE GENERAL AND THE PRINCIPAL OFFICER'S RESIDENCE. THE POLICE HAVE BEEN INFORMED THAT THE TRADE CENTER'S EXHIBITION HALL ON GROUND FLOOR IS CURRENTLY PUTTING ON A SHOW WHICH INCLUDES A LARGE QUANTITY OF VERY VALUABLE DATAMATIC EQUIPMENT. APPARENTLY THE POLICE DO NOT INTEND TO POST CONSTANT GUARDS AT THESE INSTALLATIONS BUT DO INTEND TO CONDUCT FREQUENT CLOSE SURVEILLANCE OF ALL ESTABLISHMENTS, PARTICULARLY AT NIGHT. SPECIAL BRANCH CHIEF EXPRESSED THE TENTATIVE OPINION THAT THESE TWO AMATEURISH ACTS WERE A FLASH IN THE PAN ASSOCIATED WITH THE EXMOUTH LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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DEMONSTRATION AND PROBABLY WOULD NOT BE REPEATED.
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Message Attributes

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To: CANBERRA
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